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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: RPG OPPOSITION PARTY EAGER FOR ELECTIONS

REF: A. CONAKRY 1186  
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 1146

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Leaders of the opposition Rally for the Guinean People (RPG) party told poloff that they are eager for legislative elections and see them as a viable mechanism for affecting political change. Contacts were frustrated with election delays, but optimistic that elections could take place before June 2008. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Poloff met with two executive board members of the RPG opposition party on October 24: Dr. Mohamed Diane and Ibrahima Khalil Keita. Keita is also one of the twenty-five representatives appointed to the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI). Drawing most of its support from the Malinke ethnic group based in Upper Guinea, the RPG is considered a leftist opposition party.

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BACKGROUND  
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[1](#)3. (U) The RPG is led by Alpha Conde, an intellectual political activist who left Guinea in 1956 to pursue an education in France. He did not return to Guinea until 1991 when he became involved in local politics. Conde has been a contender in Guinea,s last two presidential elections, winning nearly 20% of the vote in 1993 and 16% in 1998. Shortly after the 1998 elections, he was arrested and charged with treason. Conde was sentenced to five years in prison, but was released in 2001 under presidential pardon. He then left for France and did not return to Guinea until 2005. Under Conde,s leadership, the RPG boycotted the 2002 legislative elections, but did participate in Guinea,s 2005 local elections during which they won the mayor positions in Kankan, Faranah and Kouroussa (Upper Guinea).

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ELECTIONS ARE A MECHANISM FOR CHANGE  
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[1](#)4. (SBU) According to Mohamed Diane, the RPG is eager for legislative elections and sees them as a viable mechanism for affecting political change. However, Diane said that the government lacks the political will necessary to push the process forward. &It starts all the way at the top,8 he said, &with (President) Conte,s refusal to sign administrative decrees,8 referring to delays in establishing the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI). When asked whether Prime Minister Kouyate is also delaying progress on elections, Diane said the majority of the delays are coming from Conte,s political power base.

[1](#)5. (SBU) Diane suggested that Kouyate,s main problem is that his government is essentially blocked because Conte continues to maintain a tight hold on powers of state. &If I were Kouyate, I would focus on holding elections because it

is the one concrete thing the (Kouyate) government can do,8 he said. In addition, transparent elections will lend credibility to Kouyate,s government, he said.

¶16. (SBU) Diane emphasized that despite the appointment of Kouyate,s consensus government, the underlying bureaucracy remains essentially unchanged. He said that most bureaucrats are long-time supporters of Conte and the ruling Party for Unity and Progress (PUP). &They should be replaced before we hold elections,8 he said, citing concerns about potential manipulation of election results by Conte,s cronies.

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WE REQUESTED THE DELAY  
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¶17. (SBU) In regard to the Ministry of Interior and Security,s (MIS) recent announcement that the government is halting all elections preparations until the establishment of the CENI, Diane said that this delay was actually at the request of all political parties. In an October 12 meeting between Kouyate and political parties, representatives reportedly told Kouyate that they did not want to proceed further on elections without the CENI for fear of jeopardizing overall transparency. At the same time, Diane said, the RPG is frustrated with the slow pace of election preparations. &We wanted elections in December, but we recognize that that is now impossible.8

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CENI LIKELY TO BE SET UP SOON, BUT NO BUDGET  
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¶18. (SBU) Diane was optimistic that the CENI would be

CONAKRY 00001190 002 OF 002

established soon, noting that Kouyate told parties that he would authorize the establishment of the CENI himself within two weeks if Conte did not sign the decree. (COMMENT. If Kouyate did say this, it would be surprising if he follows through since it could be seen as a public defiance of Conte and is inconsistent with Kouyate,s methods to date. An EU contact told DCM that he had heard Kouyate make this promise as well. END COMMENT.) Diane said that if the CENI is not established by October 26, the RPG will publicly protest via official public statements.

¶19. (SBU) Regarding the European Union,s elections assistance project for voter registration, Diane said that the RPG is frustrated that the Government of Guinea has not been more proactive. &This is a great opportunity for us to have a valid voter list for the first time, not just for these elections, but for the presidential elections as well,8 he said.

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ELECTIONS POSSIBLE BY JUNE  
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¶10. (SBU) When asked about timing of elections, Diane said that once the CENI is in place, there is no reason that elections be delayed beyond June 2008. Diane added that political parties will likely be ready to settle on a new elections date once the CENI is on board. While Diane did not think the CENI representatives would have much difficulty electing a CENI president and members of the executive board, he said that there is currently no budget for the CENI.

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ON POLITICAL ALLIANCES...  
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¶11. (SBU) Referring to other opposition parties, recent efforts to forge political alliances, Diane said that the RPG already has a solid alliance in place, but are open to additional alliances should an offer be made. (NOTE. The

RPG is allied with several minor opposition parties. END  
NOTE.)

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COMMENT  
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¶12. (SBU) Poloff,s discussion with RPG executive board members suggests that the party is supportive of Kouyate,s administration. Although Kouyate has not made any public indication of his possible affiliation with any political party, both the press and a number of contacts have speculated that if Kouyate were to join an existing party, it could be the RPG. Kouyate, a Malinke, comes from Kouroussa, which is a significant political support base for RPG. END  
COMMENT.  
CARTER